

JOURNALS IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM LIBRARY: PAPER, ELECTRONIC, AGGREGATION, PAY PER USE

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ABSTRACT: As we move into the new millennium the entire journal publishing and marketing picture is undergoing rapid change. We must now make decisions on electronic access to journals that you essentially rent, restrictive licensing contracts, issues of simultaneous users, archival commitments and services, and value added services. No longer are we simply evaluating and selecting individual titles. We are becoming involved in long term consortial arrangements, purchasing aggregations of journal titles, contracting for document delivery, or setting up pay-per-use contracts. Leverage is becoming more important than content in our deliberations. This new environment of publishing requires a new approach to selection of resources for our libraries.

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Selecting journals for our clientele used to be a fairly simple process of evaluating the content and integrity of the journal, comparing it to the needs of our clientele, and then deciding if the price was acceptable for our budget. But as we move into the new millennium, the entire journal publishing and marketing picture is changing at a rapid rate. As publishers and vendors struggle with the new marketplace, they are testing new products, and new methods of selling these products to libraries. In turn librarians are straining to keep up with the changes in format, and are trying to understand the new pricing and sales techniques. We are already finding that the new publishing environment is going to require a new approach to selection of resources for our libraries.

The change of the journal from a paper product to an electronic product has been a boon for libraries. Finally we can really deliver library services directly to our clientele wherever and whenever they need them. Our services are not placebound and do not require open-hours. But with this have come many complexities in purchasing and accessing materials.

The publishers and vendors started out fearing the power of the technology. They feared that they would lose sales because libraries could share articles more easily. They feared

they would lose sales because the faculty of one institution would just copy and send an article to colleagues at another institution. Their answer was restrictive licensing agreements for the electronic version of the journal. Licenses define who can access the electronic journal and what they can legally do with the information they find. As licenses have developed, different publishers have included different restrictions. Most prohibit a library from using the electronic version for ILL, even when they own the paper copy. Some limit how many simultaneous users can access the product. Some prohibit the accessing of their product from a network. They decide who our clientele is, for the terms of use of their product, and at what distance (from the library that signed the license) that product can be used.

What does this mean to us? What will happen when we have all signed away our right to use the electronic journal for ILL, and the paper version ceases to be published? According to the Washington State Attorney General, we have signed a binding contract, and unless we can renegotiate the terms, we are stuck with this limitation. ILL will cease to exist for electronic versions of journals.

The terms of these licenses have become part of our collection development decisions. Libraries must carefully read each contract. We need to attempt to negotiate the removal of the clauses that limit our service to our clientele. We need to ask for things that we want. At WSU we always negotiate the right to use a title for ILL. We seldom get this change, but sometimes we do. We always ask for our defined clientele to be all WSU faculty, and students, wherever they are in the state. We always ask for use statistics. Some licenses we do not sign, because the terms are too restrictive, or unworkable for our institution. Our only power is the decision not to sign a license. So in the end, the terms of the license are one major factor in the decision to subscribe or not subscribe to a title.

Pricing of the electronic version of journals is another area where the publishers are feeling their way. They are testing to see what the market will bear. Some publishers offer the electronic version free if we purchase the print. Some charge extra for the electronic, if we also subscribe to the print. Some charge the same for print as they do for electronic. Some are charging more for electronic than print. Some are offering a lower rate for electronic access only, in an effort to move away from being expected to publish in print. Some, like IDEAL, have such convoluted pricing formulas that it is impossible to figure out what they are charging us for electronic and for paper. Recently I had an opportunity to look at the pricing of a group of journals published by the same publisher, and discovered that they had different print/electronic pricing structures for each title. The pricing models may become more predictable soon. It has been observed that the trend is to move to the following pricing mode: electronic access and print product at 10% above the price of print alone, and electronic access at 10% less than print subscription.

But the main point, as far as collection development is concerned, is that we must make subscription decisions, balancing the relative values of format and the pricing of each.

And then there are the aggregators. Publishers like Academic Press and Elsevier have bundled their titles into aggregate services, added search engines and other added value features, and then sell this product at a very high price. Unfortunately they tie the price to the value of our print subscriptions, and add restrictions on how many titles we can cancel in any year. Publishers like Annual Reviews instead offer flexible packages or aggregates that can actually reduce the total cost of subscriptions for a large institution. The aggregated electronic journals are still testing the market. We in turn must decide if the added value features are worth the price.

Aggregations bring up other collection development issues. The obvious advantage is that we can get a large number of titles for a greatly reduced price, over purchasing electronic access to each title separately. But how many of the titles in an aggregation would we actually choose for our collections? Can we afford to purchase a group of e-journals because we really want some of the titles? If the aggregate contract requires that we maintain our print subscriptions, can we afford this down the line? Each offering must be carefully evaluated for the cost and benefit to our clientele.

For the small special library this offers some other challenges. How much of our money do we put in the aggregations? How do we balance the special subject needs of our clientele, and the availability of very broad-based collections of journals?

Consortial purchases are not only on the rise, but are necessary to modern collection development, considering our dwindling budgets. With consortial buying we can afford to purchase large and expensive products, and journal aggregations that we could not on our own. Again this type of purchasing carries pitfalls. We are frequently purchasing an aggregate of titles, many of which may be of little use to our local clientele. We are making a long-term commitment of funds, and making a contract with other libraries to continue to be a member of the consortium. In times of budget crisis, this may result in a dilemma for the individual library. It may be honor bound to a consortial contract, which should be discontinued as the least valuable of the resources presently held.

Even shared purchases within an institution can allow the purchase of a group of titles that could not otherwise be purchased. But a long-term commitment is needed. Several years ago five of the WSU Libraries went in together to purchase a group of journals in paper and print format. This was a long-term commitment for some of our libraries. It was a purchase of convenience for others. When budget problems came, some of the libraries simply said they could not contribute that year. That left the other libraries paying the extra contributions. Later another library wanted to cancel some of the journal titles they had committed to, because they were judged of little value to the collection. Since there was a no-cancellation clause in the contract, again other libraries had to cover the cost or loose the contract. A firm written agreement should be made between all libraries in any buying group.

In some larger institutions, the shared purchases of aggregated journals may be of great value to the most of the member libraries, but be a problem for the small specialty

libraries. The small library may be pressured to contribute more funds to a product that benefits all, but which carries limited specialty journals. Then they have less money to purchase the specialty journals they need. Another scenario is that more of the institutions' materials budget is being taken off the top for these types of consortial purchases, resulting in less being allocated to the individual libraries. The librarian must be aware of these trends, and be ready to respond.

Then there is the question of archiving. When we buy a paper journal, we own it forever. If we are forced to stop subscribing or the journal ceases publication, we still have access to the issues we paid for. But in the electronic world we have to investigate the archiving issue carefully. If a journal stops publication what happens to the electronic database? Will it still be available to our clientele? How do we continue to access it? If we stop subscribing to a title will the publisher continue to allow our clientele to access the issues we paid for? If not, will they give us the data to load on our own system? At what price? Will they give us a tape to load or a CD-ROM? Does it include search software? If the publisher is not offering these options, is there an archival service like JSTOR that you can contract with to do so? What does the extra cost of an archival service add to the subscription cost? These are the elements of any decision to drop paper subscriptions and go to electronic.

Recently pay-per use contracts have entered the picture. This purchase option is being offered by aggregators, by individual journal publishers, and by large document delivery services. This is a very cost-effective way to increase access to articles from journals of marginal use in our collections, without paying prices for full subscriptions. Usually they cost less than the true cost of an ILL for each article. Our patrons can search and access the articles they want without staff intervention. One unfortunate problem with this type of service is that we never really own the journal. Although most offer a set length of time that other people in the same institution can access the article free, in the end we have paid for access for each article and never really own it. We can pay for the same article again and again over time. We need to weigh the value of this type of access to materials against the traditional ownership of materials.

Finally, leverage is becoming more important than content in our deliberations. Is a product that allows our user to link directly from an index to the electronic text of the article (when we already have a license to the electronic journal) more valuable than subscribing to more journal titles? Is the ability to click on the footnote or bibliography entry, and be taken directly to that article, again if we have the license to that title, more valuable than subscribing to more titles? This leverage is usually tied to a value added service for which we are paying extra above and beyond the normal subscription. It will result in better use of the collections we do have, and will make our users more efficient with their research, but at the cost of adding more subscriptions. We each must weigh these factors when making our decisions about what to purchase.

This new environment of publishing is going to require a new approach to selection of resources for our libraries. The new factors by which we evaluate journals are:

- Can our clientele access this product from any location?
- Are there any limitations on which of our clientele can access the product?
- How many people can access the title or service at the same time? How much extra will it cost?
- Can we use this product for ILL? Is sharing with another campus or branch considered ILL?
- Can individual articles be mounted in electronic reserves systems?
- What is the cost for print, for print + electronic, and for electronic alone? What is the best value for us? What can we afford?
- Will the publisher give us use statistics?
- Will any of the terms of the license limit the usability of the product?
- What is the value of an aggregated collection of titles to our clientele? How many of the titles included are really of value? How many are padding?
- Is the aggregation of titles worth the price, and are there any limitations to the cancellation of print versions?
- Are large aggregates with added value features such as search capabilities, crossref, and alerting systems worth the extra cost?
- What will be the long-term effect of inflation on the electronic and print versions? What will the inability to cancel titles as needed do to our budgets?
- Are the value-added features worth the cost?
- Is your library truly committed to continuing a consortial or group purchase? Will you be able to pay your share every year?
- Are the libraries involved in the consortial or group purchase reliable? Will they stay with the product, and pay their share?
- Can you move your consortial purchase from a smaller consortial group to a larger group without losing the backfiles or other special features that you have already paid for?
- What will you do if the consortial group decides to discontinue the group purchase, or enough libraries drop out that the price rises beyond what is reasonable to pay?
- Is the archiving agreement such that you can drop print and choose electronic access only? If not, is there an archiving service that will provide access to these titles?
- Does the product leverage your other subscriptions in such a way that it offers more value to our user than purchasing additional products?

